

## CHES Offers New Database on Cancer Cases

Kansas Information for Communities (KIC) began in 2000 as an attempt to make vital statistics data more accessible to policy makers and the general public. During February 2004, the Center for Health and Environmental Statistics (CHES) added its eighth query module to the site at <http://kic.kdhe.state.ks.us/kic/>.

What makes this special is that this module represents collaboration among the Office of Health Care Information (OHCI), the Office of Health Promotion (OHP) and the Kansas Cancer Registry (KCR) operated by the University of Kansas Medical Center under a contract with OHP. The KCR, which was established by state statutes, is a comprehensive, statewide registry of cancer cases. Data from KCR are used to monitor the burden of cancer in the state, to develop cancer prevention and control programs, to conduct needs assessments, to evaluate concerns about cancer clusters, and others. KCR collects cancer data under a contract with OHP. Once a year's worth of data is prepared, OHP shares it with OHCI where it is aggregated for use in KIC.

The KIC cancer query module summarizes cancer cases by type of cancer, year of occurrence, county of residence, age, sex, and race. The module will produce counts and population-based crude and age adjusted rates.

The new cancer query module is the most complex to date. While the KIC data does not contain protected health information, a chance exists that someone could be indirectly identified by the unique characteristics aggregated in the summary results; therefore, special programming masks small cell values in query results.

In order to protect individual confidentiality, OHCI modified KIC programming so it would publish a range of values instead of actual counts. When a cell count is less than six, KIC publishes a range of values. The module also implements complementary cell masking to prevent users from deducing the cell values. The changes diminish the risk of individual disclosure.

Context-sensitive comments alert users to the six gender-specific cancers. This is important because the rate calculation requires the use of gender-specific population data for the denominator values. The user must manually perform the selection of gender-specific data within KIC.

Like many data sets cancer data may be a year or two behind the event year. KCR's collection of cancer case information is continuous. Because it might take two years to gather all of the cases in a given year, KIC results may change as updated data sets are posted. Complex queries and special study issues should be directed to Charlie Hunt, OHP Senior Epidemiologist.

The cancer module joins modules on births, deaths, pregnancy outcomes, hospital discharges, reportable diseases, population, and Kansas City metro area deaths. The KIC site also provides help tools, explaining KIC methodology, data sources, and rate calculation. CHES is considering additional modules for marriage and divorce.

Query modules are not limited to vital statistics data. Any point-in-time event data can be considered KIC material. CHES is interested in working with other KDHE programs to create addition query modules.

The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is reviewing the KIC software as a possible approach to providing web-based crime statistics. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services developed the core KIC programming as part of its Missouri Information for Community Assessment program. A grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration supported the CHES's software implementation.